



# GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

MAY 2017 VOLUME 8 ISSUE 5

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## Once we were strangers



by Susan Beckett  
Publisher

With so much attention focused on immigrants, some in my circle have begun sharing the stories of how our families came to this country. My husband's ancestors included Quakers escaping religious persecution in England. Another set came from Scotland – one was a Highlander and the other a Lowlander at a time when the two groups were deadly enemies and the couple could not live safely in either area.

My friend Lorene's great-grandparents abandoned Ireland during the great potato famine. One of her husband's

great-grandparents fled conscription by the Russian Czar.

My maternal grandparents came from Russia and Romania at the start of the 20th century to escape pogroms. My other grandparents brought my father here from Germany in 1938, barely escaping the Nazis. There were strict immigration quotas for Jews at that time and they all needed someone to sponsor them – to assume financial responsibility in case they were unable to support themselves.

My grandfather had seen trouble coming and sent his much-younger brother to America with money to start a business and get established here. Unfortunately, the brother made some bad investments and was not in a strong enough financial position to sponsor my grandfather when the time came.

My great-grandfather had 16 siblings and a handful had immigrated to the United States some years earlier. My grandfather wrote all his cousins, desperately seeking a sponsor. He suffered the stigma of being the "smart one." In Germany, each branch of our family ran a rag collection business in a different town. They were part of a larger business that made the rags into paper. My grandfather was sent to the university so he could be the comptroller of the larger business. His male cousins were particularly disgruntled about that. Perhaps that is why they ignored his pleas for sponsorship. Eventually, one of his sisters and her husband responded from Indianapolis saying that they would be his family's sponsor.

Between the Depression and anti-German sentiment that extended to German refugees, the early years were not easy. Jews were not allowed to take money with them from Germany but my grandparents had managed to take a large quantity of furniture and musical instruments along with some jewelry. They sold much of it to support themselves.

As happens with many immigrants, my grandfather's advanced degrees and professional experience were of small value here. It was my grandmother, who had never worked a day in her life, who first found a job – cooking for children at a summer camp in the Berkshires – by virtue of her culinary arts degree from a fancy French cooking school. I can't

imagine that it went well.

My earliest memory of her cooking is gagging on aspic, a savory gelatin served with meat, which my parents assured me was a delicacy but that my sister and I found disgusting. By that time, my grandmother was teaching French and German at the nearby Springfield Massachusetts High School of Commerce. A woman who longed to study psychiatry with Freud, she resented being forced instead to study cooking, marry, have children and then spend most of her adult life catering to children.

My grandfather eventually found work selling advertising on give-away items to local businesses. His garage-full of pens, sifters, rain hats, rulers, piggy banks and other promotional items was a treasure trove for visiting children. He del-

ighted in our appreciation of the kingly stores he so freely shared. He made rounds to customers for the rest of his life, enjoying the visits and conversation, more content than resentful. Feeling that all his years of education were a waste, he never pushed his sons academically, though both graduated from college anyway.

Though they all faced difficulties, one major difference between our ancestors' immigration stories and those of today is the worry of deportation. Even my Romanian grandfather, who was 19 when he arrived in New York and purportedly got caught up with the Jewish mob, never feared being sent back. Had they felt that their new country was also against them, I don't know if they would have been able to strive and sacrifice so that their children would be safe and thrive.

Many of the great American innovators have been second- or third-generation innovators. Would Elon Musk have

been able to concentrate in school if his mind wandered with worry that his parents might be taken at any time?

And what of the future? Will we lose our competitive edge in the high-tech industries when highly skilled foreign-born workers are no longer granted H-1 visas? Will large numbers of U.S.-born children of undocumented-immigrant parents wind up in our foster care system? The Pew Research Center estimates that four million children will be placed in the foster care system if Trump really does deport 11 million people. And what of the rest?

In the next decades will we be swamped with the return of U.S.-born children who left with their illegal-immigrant parents? Thousands of these children whose first language is English go to Mexico and Central America when their parents are deported. They struggle to recover from the trauma of displacement and they struggle to learn in Spanish, a language in which many have only a limited academic vocabulary. Will they acquire the education and resiliency to be productive citizens or will we have made them into the shiftless leeches their parents are unfairly portrayed as?

And who will help the farmers with their fruits and other delicate crops that must be handpicked? There are not enough unemployed Americans who have the physical ability and life circumstances to undertake all of the grueling, itinerant harvesting jobs.

We could avoid many of the problems posed by mass deportations if we allow those who have respected our laws and worked steadily to return quickly – or better yet be diverted from deportation. They could be granted appropriate legal status to work here for a designated period of time during which they could apply for citizenship. For years, there has been bi-partisan talk of the need for immigration reform that includes a guest worker program. Instead of condoning decrees that disrupt families and our economy, Congress must finally pass a humane and comprehensive immigration reform package.

## LETTER to the EDITOR

### Popular vote should determine president

During the lives of the founding fathers, only 10-20 percent of Americans were literate. Thus, they created the Electoral College to decide presidential elections, even to the present. Since this voter literacy level probably won't be repeated, the electoral college should be eliminated before the next presidential election.

Paul Lambert

## Love – it's about the crayons



by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell  
Groundcover Contributor

Often a large event shines with light because of small, simple, radiant moments within it. One of the beloved traditions of Mayfield Congregation UCC where I now serve is the pancake breakfasts, one in the spring and one in the fall. Two Saturdays a year we feed several hundred members, friends and neighbors from around our area in northern Illinois.

People come to linger over a delicious homemade breakfast, to buy pounds of our locally sourced and processed whole-hog sausage, to browse and shop

at the bake tables and among the attic treasures, to enjoy familiar people and to meet newcomers. Among those who dine are breakfast lovers who have eaten with us for decades and an increasing number of younger families just starting to make the pancake breakfasts a part of their annual routine.

The breakfast itself is a fundraiser for the church while all the proceeds from the bake tables and attic treasures are given away each December to agencies and programs across DeKalb County. Twice a year, starting at 6:30 am, I am the first person people greet, just inside the door, when they arrive for breakfast. I have the opportunity to see everyone coming in and going out.

## “Ordinary spiritual moments are available to all of us.”

Among the 340 people who ate at this spring's breakfast, I still remember one person. She was full of infectious light that spread in my direction. With her I shared a tiny exchange in a big, busy morning.

As people came in the door, they went up the stairs to buy breakfast tickets or to shop and then down to the dining room to eat. For much of the morning there was a steady stream headed up and down. The one young girl still now on my mind was the only person on the stairs as she descended from attic treasures. Clutched to her chest was a box of 64 Crayola crayons she bought there. I didn't know her, but she looked me right in the eye and said boldly and without a doubt: “I love crayons! I can't live without crayons!!!”

My quick response was something about her being a budding artist. Then she was out the door and on her way. I smiled for the rest of the morning.

The girl with the crayons carried herself with pure enthusiasm. She identified what she loved. The object of her affection was right in her arms. She was strikingly clear about how important those crayons were to her. I was delighted she was unafraid to tell me, an adult she didn't know, about her utter joy in

finding a box of 64 crayons for sale at the spring pancake breakfast.

Awareness of what we love, where our passions are, clarity and an appropriate readiness to share that with others are marks of a vital spiritual life. Her crayons provide colors she can use now to make meaning in her life while connecting her with others. From the brief encounter we had, I have carried away hope for me and for everyone to whom I tell her story.

We are knee-deep in spring, the earth's season of fresh growth, abundant blossoms and promises for future fruitfulness. As we breathe in spring's possibilities, let's take the opportunity to put a name to what we love, what we care about, what causes our hearts to sing. Let's be deliberate and clear in distinguishing that which enlivens and energizes us from that which depletes us. And finally, let's be generous in acknowledging to others our enthusiasm for such love and clarity in our lives.

Ordinary spiritual moments are available to all of us. They expand our hearts, offer the sure grace of clearness, and nudge us to pass the gift on to those around us. I found myself in such a light-filled moment with one girl, about seven or eight years old, on the stairs, with her newly purchased bargain box of 64 crayons.

### Washtenaw County Meals on Wheels & Senior Café Program Locations

**ANN ARBOR**  
**Adult Day Services**, The Oaks, 2500 S. Main Street (734)662-4001  
**Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels** (Home Delivered Meals) (734)998-6686  
**Bakers Commons**, 106 Packard (734)794-6720  
**Jewish Community Center**, 2935 Birch Hollow (734)971-0990  
**Pittsfield Senior Center**, 701 W. Ellsworth (734)822-2117  
**Silver Club/Turner**, 2401 Plymouth Road, Suite C. (734)998-9352  
**Turner Senior Wellness Program**, 2401 Plymouth Road, Suite C (734)998-9353

**CHELSEA** (Senior Café & Home Delivered Meals)  
**Chelsea Senior Center**, 512 E. Washington (734)475-9242

**DEXTER** (Senior Café & Home Delivered Meals)  
**Dexter Senior Center**, 7720 Ann Arbor Street (734)426-7737

**MILAN** (Senior Café & Home Delivered Meals)  
**Milan Seniors for Healthy Living**, 45 Neckel Ct., (734)508-6229

**NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP**  
**Northfield Township Community Center**, 9101 N. Main Street (734)449-2295

**YPSILANTI**  
**Lincoln Golden Ages Seniors**, 8970 Whittaker Road (734)483-8366  
**Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels** (Home Delivered Meals) (734)487-9669  
**Ypsilanti Senior Center**, 1015 Congress Street (734)483-5014  
**Ypsilanti, Township Community Center**, 2025 E. Clark (734)544-3838

For more information contact:  
**Marti Lachapell at lachapellm@ewashtenaw.org**

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## Denial: not just a river in Egypt (Part Three – carbonated beverages)

by **Martin Stolzenberg**  
**Groundcover Contributor**

*Editor's note: this is the third in a four-part series on major United States industries that are using lawmakers and public relations to thwart needed changes in our country that affect every one of us in order to maximize their profits. Parts One and Two dealt with the tobacco and fossil fuel industries.*

The makers of soda pop have taken a different tack than the tobacco and fossil fuel industries. They can't readily deny that consuming their products, which mostly contain sugar, leads to obesity, diabetes and heart disease. So they try to stop scientists and nutritionists from talking about the problem, or suggest people should have better self-control or exercise more to combat the symptoms. Meanwhile, they continue to spend hundreds of millions on advertising and promotions to get people to drink more of their stuff.

Here is what simplecapacity.com had to say in October, 2016 on its blog: "Under the guise of sweet charitable giving,

soda makers are handing out millions to big name health organizations so that the groups stay quiet about health issues that threaten to slim down drink profits – not to mention Americans themselves – a new study suggests.

Between 2011 and 2015, Coca-Cola Company and PepsiCo sponsored 96 national health organizations, including the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association, and the American Society for Nutrition, researchers report in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine.

While there is no direct proof of the effect of such sponsorships, it is hard to believe that the industry is doing this out of the goodness of their hearts. In one instance, a non-profit group, Save the Children, had strongly supported a campaign to adopt a soda tax to help combat childhood obesity. They quickly dropped support of the soda tax after the organization received more than \$5 million from Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, although they deny the connection.

In 2015, *The New York Times* uncovered a financial link between Coca-Cola

and a research group, Global Energy Balance Network out of the University of Colorado. This bogus group downplayed the role of sugary beverages in poor health and obesity. The group tried to shift the focus to the need for more exercise. After the financial disclosure, the group was disbanded and the chief scientist of Coca-Cola resigned.

Meanwhile, lobbyists for the beverage makers successfully campaigned against nearly 20 proposed state and federal regulations aimed at protecting public health, such as improvements to nutrition labeling and soda taxes. Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City tried to cap fountain drink sizes at 16 ounces within the city. The hue and cry that went up about Constitutional law being denied was enormous. Ultimately, The New York Supreme Court struck down the law in 2014.

This is a big business, up to \$98 billion in 2015, dominated by Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Dr. Pepper Snapple Group. The problem of too much soda drinking is largely one of "too much of a bad thing." Starting in the 1980s the

market leaders, Coca-Cola and Pepsi, were fiercely competing for more shelf space and fountain distribution. Since just about everyone drank their product, the only ways to get more business were to gain more market share or to increase consumption.

Increasing the amount consumers drink was pretty easy. Companies started pushing larger and larger sizes. Restaurants and fast food outlets were encouraged to just give away seconds and thirds. Consumers became accustomed to downing more of the sugary stuff. It worked, and consumption of soda doubled by the late years of the 20th century.

While this was happening, rates of obesity, diabetes and other weight-related health issues were also soaring. Simplecapacity.com reported that in 2009 the average American slurped 46 gallons of soda. It's no wonder about two-fifths of adults and 17 percent of children were obese. It was further estimated that sugary drinks were responsible for a fifth of the American weight gain.

see **DENIAL**, page 11

## Constituents voice health care concerns to Representatives at town hall

by **Malinda Holmes**  
**EMU Contributor**

"Show me your budget and I'll tell you your priorities." – *Joe Biden, Former Vice President of the United States*

Donald Trump ran his presidential campaign on the promise that he would repeal and replace Obamacare. In March, House Republicans introduced the American Healthcare Act (ACHA), which was quickly nicknamed Trumpcare.

On March 19, Eastern Michigan University hosted a town hall forum to answer questions that citizens had regarding the looming Republican repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), commonly known as Obamacare. United States House representative, Debbie Dingell, Adam Zemke of Dexter, Donna Lasinski of Scio Township, Yousef Rabhi of Ann Arbor, and Ronnie Peterson of Ypsilanti, all Democrats, facilitated discussion.

Among the nearly 100 attendees, almost a quarter of the audience lined up behind a single microphone to ask questions and voice their concerns. While an array of complex questions were asked and answered, the most common question was quite simple:

*How will the repeal of the Affordable Care Act and/or the passage of the*



**Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, State Representatives Ronnie Peterson, Adam Zemke, Donna Lasinski and Yousef Rabhi responded to constituent concerns about health care at the March 10 town hall at EMU.**

*American Healthcare Act affect me and my family?*

The representatives made clear that the consequences would be devastating for 98 percent of Americans:

- The ACA and its expansion of Medicaid coverage lowered the number of uninsured citizens from 41.3 million in 2013 to 28 million in 2017. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the repeal of the ACA would result in the number of uninsured increasing to 32 million by 2026.
- Premiums for those who choose to purchase privatized insurance would increase by 20 to 25 percent.

- Private insurers would be permitted to deny coverage for those with pre-existing conditions, such as a disability, diabetes, asthma or cancer.

These effects are expected to be particularly damaging to the health and well-being of older and low-income citizens.

Some Americans will benefit from the potential passage of the American Healthcare Act – namely, the 400 wealthiest

families in America; each would receive a tax cut of \$7 million.

Although the ACA is nowhere near a perfect solution, it provided health insurance coverage for millions and was a step in the right direction. Its repeal would be a clear reflection of Biden's profound words. The passage of the ACHA would show ordinary Americans that their needs are not prioritized by their government. The legislation has not yet been not put up to a vote due to a lack of support. At the town hall, Representative Dingell announced that she would be introducing a single-payer healthcare bill.

The representatives had one clear message to the audience: Take action. Call your senators. If you have concerns about the repeal of the ACA, make your voice heard. When we fight, we win.

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## Silver linings and surprises

by **Elizabeth "Lit" Kurtz**  
**Groundcover Vendor #159**

It was a rainy Thursday afternoon in Ann Arbor, Michigan and I had just been evicted from my last residence. The soil at the place where I was living temporarily did not absorb the rain well, but produced a slick moist clay more fit for throwing ceramic pots than for walking. Rushing back to the place, in the crisis that is homelessness, I did not weigh this when I decided to bypass the little stairway and opt for the grassy incline next to it to expedite my tasks.

My poor choice in judgement was unforgiving, resulting in a quick slam backwards, leaving me lying helpless on the soil beneath me, my left foot forced into a position several degrees past its intended angle. It took some time to convince the only person standing nearby that there was a reason for me pleading and crying for help – any help.

Talking on his cell phone beside his late-model SUV, the Uber driver glanced suspiciously in the direction where I lay, having no patience in his line of work for someone who was just trying to get attention. Having lived for more than four years being treated as though my crises were a normal order of business, I became more determined to make him look at my foot, which lay twisted like a child's toy doll.

I realized that this cry was far different from the homeless pleas for help that are never convincing enough to make some people take notice. While the circumstances of my homelessness were hidden from view, mired in a world of hobophobia and other conundrums that disguise the complexities of one's seemingly aimless wanderings and suplications, my injured foot was not. This was something real and tangible that a person could see.

For what seemed like an eternity, he gradually came around to the reality that I was really in need and agreed to call 9-1-1.

My cries for help grew a larger crowd, and soon a person emerged out of nowhere from the apartment complex with an umbrella to shield me from being soaked by the light but steady rainfall. I could hear people around me discussing what happened. A man kneeled down beside where I lay, trying to assure me that I would be fine. Someone else brought a blanket.

Somehow, I convinced a person to run the camera on my cell phone so that I could capture some footage of the



**Despite her cheerful demeanor and the help she received from social workers, Lit is facing many challenges with her broken ankle.**

event. Although it's the 21st century, not everyone thinks to capture events on their cell phone. Looking through the images, I wished I hadn't.

Although it seemed like forever, the ambulance arrived promptly. I was thankful for the time people had invested in me and before long I was in the emergency room at the University of Michigan's hospital. I dreaded my inevitable encounter with the social worker. Social workers are not supposed to give you the cold shoulder, especially when you're hurting physically or emotionally. I thought they were trained to help alleviate the emotional suffering. Since being on the streets, I have found that what is expected is far from the reality.

In most instances, interactions with annoyed-looking social workers are abrupt. Sure enough, after my being treated, a social worker was called to try and arrange a way for me to get back home. She expressed to me what I had heard before and what I would certainly hear again: that they are a hospital and not a taxi service. That they don't provide taxi rides, even if you're homeless and just broke your left ankle and are released on a dark rainy night, disoriented by intravenous pain medication and newly balancing yourself on crutches.

Yet, despite her hesitancy and repeated admonishment of it being out of the ordinary, she ordered a taxi to get me home, or least the place where I was staying after my most recent eviction. There I was able to elevate the foot and pray that the intravenous pain drips would last until my prescription was filled the following day.

I slept fitfully through the night on a

large plush sofa, the type abandoned on the side of the road when interior decorating upgrades require change. Throughout the night I was routinely interrupted by my hosting friend with intermittent queries of whether or not I wanted a glass of water, apologies for the lack of food, and a sort of informal monitoring of my pain level. This guy was no nurse, but after being a single parent to a five-year-old girl since being awarded custody eight months ago, his "mothering" skills had developed. I felt blessed that right before the incident he had asked me to watch his daughter so that he could return to work.

By morning the pain medicine had started to wear off and I had to face the fact that I had no way to get my prescription filled, not only due to a lack of transportation, but because my Medicaid coverage had lapsed. After weighing my options, I decided that I would have to once again rely on an ambulance.

I dreaded this encounter with a social worker even more because it was not an emergency visit, but I couldn't fathom any other way to get my pain prescription filled before the pain meds wore off completely. I knew I was stretching the limits of emergency services and that no social worker would feel any obligation to assist me with transportation.

Lying on the stretcher, I surmised that my wobbliness on crutches, combined with the effects of the temporary pain medication I would receive in the hospital, would be reason enough to convince the social worker that I was truly in need of transportation. Still lost in these thoughts, I heard a voice of a woman telling a nurse that the situation would be handled.

Soon the face of the voice appeared and a woman was standing in front of me, half discussing my situation in third person with medical personnel while observing me as she spoke. It appeared that only minutes after hearing of my case, she had taken control and assessed my needs.

Soon she addressed me.

"Don't worry, we'll get your medication. We'll get your Medicaid back. Don't even think about walking on that foot – don't even make me go there!"

My mouth was agape. I had no idea who this African American woman was. She did not resemble the type of social worker I had encountered in the past. She wore loose dreads and spoke

to me as though she was a friend.

"Are... are ... you ... a ... social worker?" I managed to stammer in my confusion. She assured me that she was. Soon my doubt gave way to serious queries about who she was and what made her so different. We engaged in conversation during which I told her about losing my teaching job in Detroit and landing on the streets. She shared that before coming a social worker, drugs had landed her on the streets. The empathy and connection were obvious.

I explained the mix-up in my mail delivery that caused me to lose my Medicaid coverage; how my housemate had stopped all her mail during the months that she travelled out of the country and how the postal service erroneously stopped all the mail at the address, including my recertification letter for Medicaid Expansion.

She knew how to handle the problem with the deftness of a professionally trained social worker using all the resources available. The medication could be covered by a gift card and a taxi would be ordered to get me back home that night and to the pharmacy the next day.

She somehow managed to convey everything to everyone involved because the taxi service was ready when I called the following morning, well versed on the situation. I was able to get the medications and was soon back and resting comfortably on my friend's sofa.

I knew that I would need to leave my friend's soon because of lease restrictions there, but this had given me time to follow the recommendations of keeping off my foot and allowing the medicine to work its magic. With the exception of a mutual friend ordering a pizza and breadsticks for the three of us, there wasn't much food but I managed to keep up my strength on the bread, crunchy peanut butter and hazelnut spread.

My routine has changed. Rather than sell papers and jet off to another site, I hang around a little longer, reading and often writing. I believe this may be God's way of slowing me down. I am blessed to have an iPad with which I can set up "office" anywhere, mostly Starbucks. I know there is a book in me – some of the story has already been told. But with less time on my feet, there will be more time to reflect and share how this four-year journey through homelessness has changed my life forever.



## Vespers dinner: choice, worship, friendship and care

by Susan Beckett

For more than 18 years, low-income residents of Washtenaw County have enjoyed a convivial dinner every Tuesday night at the Vespers Meal located at the First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor. Many who first came out of dire need, continued to come as a way to socialize and stay connected with friends. Some stay after the meal for the vespers service and discussion session.

First Baptist shares the opportunity to serve with other congregations. First Baptist finances and serves the first two Tuesdays and helps finance the rest of the meals. The other congregations provide food and servers for the remaining Tuesdays. The congregation of Northside Community Church prepares the meal on the third and fifth Tuesdays, and Bethel United Church of Christ members come in from Manchester to serve on the fourth Tuesday. The "Doughnation" program from the nearby Panera Bread restaurant supplies most of the bread and desserts, significantly reducing costs.

"I think it's wonderful that the churches take turns cooking in this wonderful kitchen. Bonding with the other volunteers and the patrons is special, too," said Anne Subotic, a Northside server.

The dinner began as part of the Hunger Coalition's rotating meal response to people in need in the 1980s. First Baptist hosted one Tuesday each month. Along the way, some of the church members established a worship service before the meal; hence the name "Vespers," which is the traditional name for a late afternoon or evening service.



Mark, a 12-year regular at the Tuesday night Vespers meal at First Baptist Church, appreciates the theology as well as the meal with friends.

In 1997, when the Delonis Center Community Kitchen opened and the rotating meal ended, the some of those involved with vespers felt that a spiritual opportunity was being lost. While all are welcome at Sunday services, the convenience of the meal and the comfort of being known made the vespers services especially accessible to this vulnerable community. First Baptist served twice a month and eventually found partner churches, initially Northside and Vineyard, to serve the remaining Tuesdays. Bethel, whose pastor had interned at First Baptist, stepped in about five years ago when Vineyard withdrew.

Mark has been eating at the First Baptist

dinner for about 12 years. He also occasionally attends their Sunday services. "One of the things I really enjoy is the relaxed setting in a theologically sound church," he said.

Tuesday evenings begin with a prayer thanking God for the fellowship and nourishment of the meal and continue after dinner with evening prayers – the vespers service, for those who choose to stay. The 30-minute devotional service consists of prayers, hymns, reading of scripture and a brief message. The service emphasizes the goodness of God and God's love for each person, the value of each life, and mutual care within the relationships of strangers who are becoming friends.

"I feel that hosting Vespers puts more church people in direct contact with the homeless and poor... For me it makes these folks less 'them' and more 'us,'" said Mary Davis, a first Tuesday First Baptist server.

Most of the servers have a regular Tuesday and have been coming for years. "I think that most of us participate because we believe that we are called upon to share what we have with others of God's children," said Davis.

Carolyn Grapentine has been involved for at least 10 years. "I love to cook and this is my way of making the world a better place," she said.

Her fellow Northside Community Church parishioners and servers, Rhonda and Don Sizemore, have been serving for over four years and they said, "Carolyn is a great cook, and she plans all the meals and shops for all the food, too." They also shared a quip about Grapentine uttered by octogenarian Ester Yost as she was scraping carrots: "She likes to make everything from scratch. Carolyn would make us grow the carrots, too, if she could." That kind of home cooking is especially appreciated by the Tuesday night crowd.

Volunteers find other ways to help with the meal, too. Edie and Darryl Hurst come every Tuesday to recycle Styrofoam cups and food waste. Vern, a World War II vet, has come every Tuesday for the past two or three years to run the dishwasher. He also picks up any leftover bread and pastries and brings them to St. Andrew's for the next day's breakfast.

see VESPERS, page 7

## Kung Fu Panda, Vendor #279 – Cindy's hidden talents come forth

by Pauline B.  
Groundcover Vendor #351

Who knew that Cindy, who has a black belt in karate, is also an artist?

In her humbleness, and because of her struggle to survive as an independent free spirit (as all artists want and need to be), she is not able to afford her art materials of canvases, paint brushes, and acrylic paint, which is the technique she feels most comfortable with. Also, when she was homeless, she had no place to draw and paint.

Recently, Cindy transitioned into a one-bedroom apartment. She surprised everyone at Groundcover News one day when she brought in a huge wall map she made of downtown Ann Arbor to help Groundcover vendors know the downtown better. This map,



even though roughly done (for time's sake and for lack of proper space), had to have taken many days to make.

Cindy is a North American Indian, and her Indian heritage is very obvious in the brightly-colored designing ways of her paintings. I saw Cindy at the bus stop recently, and she was so happy that someone had given her a very good-quality paint brush.

Cindy is struggling and wants to paint, but cannot afford the materials. Quality art supplies are very expensive, and she also needs to eat good nutritious food so her creative abilities in her brain can come forth. She may not think so, but I say she needs nutritional supplements and organic food, also. (Despite what doctors say against nutritional healing, I know for a fact it works because it has healed me of a chemical imbalance, which caused me severe depression, and nutritional supplements, herbs and organic food keeps my heart's palpitations normal.) After years of

homelessness, Cindy also needs enough nutritious, good-quality food and supplements to eat. That's what I think, anyway.

So please buy a paper from Cindy when you see her selling her papers, and if anyone can afford to buy her acrylic paints, brushes and canvases large or small, I know she will be uplifted and encouraged to carry on.

Thank you, Groundcover patrons, for all your kind, generous help and valuable time you give us vendors when you stop to buy a paper and dig through your purses and pockets, even on rainy, snowy and freezing cold days. You are amazingly kind. Just be sure to check for the Groundcover name tags before you give, because there have been some unscrupulous, sabotaging deceivers selling papers they stole.

## Vespers dinner

continued from page 6

"My wife passed away and I had time to do it. I enjoy the other people and being able to do it. I just turned 94 and it's something for me to do. I scrub the pans – that's all we use that needs to be washed," Vern explained.

Dinner guests frequently peruse the clothing closet that stands open along the wall where folks line up to get dinner. Seasonally appropriate outerwear is an especially popular choice. First Baptist parishioner donations stock the closet with new coats at the start of winter – they are claimed almost as soon as they are hung. New underwear

is also contributed. Bethel brings new tube socks stuffed with goodies to hand out at their December meal, and sometimes they have large mats woven from plastic bags that they give out to help folks sleeping outdoors stay dry.

With its handy location on Washington St. near the corner of State, First Baptist offers an alternative to those who normally eat the Community Kitchen meal at the Delonis Center. Some guests call on Tuesday afternoon and inquire about the menu to help them decide which venue to opt for that night. Davis thinks the opportunity to choose is one of the First Baptist's gifts to the community. Most regular patrons,

though, appreciate the more relaxed and convivial atmosphere at First Baptist and come regardless of the menu.

Rose, a regular diner, commented, "I usually come here for a change of pace from Delonis... It seems like a more relaxed atmosphere. And some people who have been banned from the Delonis Center really depend on this meal."

Some patrons started coming to the meal when they had no place to cook for themselves but continue to dine there to share a meal with friends.

"It took me a while to get used to [the change from Hunger Coalition rotating dinners], but I don't depend on it like

I used to. I hardly go to Delonis now that I have my own place. I come here to hang out and see who's here," said JD, one of the diners.

There are people on fixed incomes who attend the meals to stretch their food dollars, some coming only toward the end of the month when their cupboards are empty. Many take home containers of extra food to help them get through the next few days, too.

The dinner is open to all from 5:30 – 6:15 p.m. every Tuesday in the big stone church located at 517 E. Washington. Donations to the meal can be sent to First Baptist with a note on the check indicating it is for the Vespers Meal.



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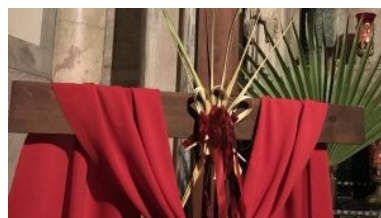
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5 pm

**Sunday**

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## Sudoku ★★★★★ 4puz.com



Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

I'm in Heaven Peter A. Collins

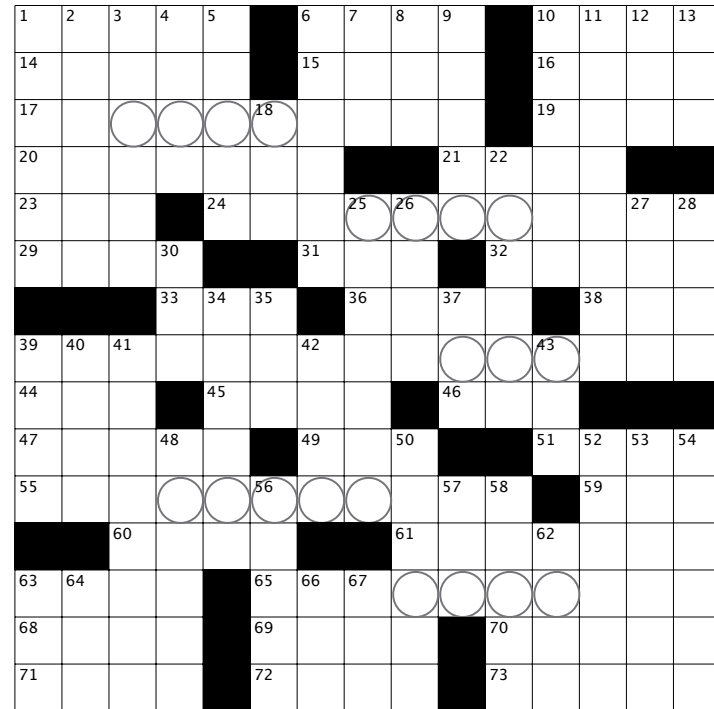
### ACROSS

1. Zoo quadruped
6. No-goodniks
10. Ilk
14. Orchestra quartet, often
15. Like much testimony
16. Fireworks watchers' cries
17. Ellington classic
19. Future flowers
20. Maugham's "Of Human \_\_\_\_"
21. Address for a woman
23. He followed "Give 'em Hell Harry"
24. Harmonicas
29. Exxon's ex-name
31. "The Raven" author
32. Resplendent
33. Ingredients in Caesar's salad?
36. "Typee" follow-up
38. Zoo quadruped
39. Hotel amenity
44. Likely
45. Ticket remnant
46. Avian sound
47. Occupy, as a table
49. OAK foes, on a scoreboard
51. Crash-investigating org.
55. Lavender lemonade or turmeric tea

59. Bygone Mideast inits.
60. Equivalent of "ish"
61. No-go
63. Bear on a hard bed
65. Red-bowed animated feline
68. What we are more today than yesterday
69. "Miracle Mets" center fielder Tommie
70. When doubled, a Kingsmen hit
71. Sleep
72. Goes to sleep
73. Not sleeping

### DOWN

1. Undead one
2. Kindle fodder



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3. Singers Pat and Debbie
4. Comedic Foxx
5. 2007 Alicia Keys album
6. Approached on horseback
7. Jackie's second spouse
8. New garment appendage
9. Option for some ESPN replays
10. Trinidad's neighbor
11. Words of dismissal
12. Brown piece of paper?
13. Spherical starter?
18. "Doctors Without Borders", e.g.
22. Southwestern gully
25. Strip of icons
26. Spherical starter?
27. iPod model
28. Inner-city blight
30. Alley \_\_\_\_
34. Scenic overlook amenity
35. U-verse offerer
37. Available with no Rx
39. Meat-and-potatoes dish
40. '60's TV lad
41. Big name in tanning
42. "\_\_\_ Lang Syne"
43. 40-Down player Howard
48. Scuff
50. Supermarket rows
52. "Naughty, naughty!"
53. Cold war agreement
54. Supreme Court Justice Stephen
56. "Freaky Friday" star
57. Cpl. or sgt.
58. Fran and Ollie's friend
62. Chihuahua relatives
63. Unethically inflate
64. Before now
66. Diva's problem
67. Spearheaded

## VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

by Elena Bernier, Sophia Dinov and Claire Middleton

### Community High School Contributors

People sat and walked along the rocks at Santa Monica Pier in the 90s. It was Felicia Wilbert's favorite pier. She was there on a date with 80s rapper Joe Cooley. When Felicia made her way back to her home with Cooley at her side, girls burst out in squeals and screams at the sight of him.

Felicia, confused, playfully pushed him into her house and asked him who he was. Cooley laughed and explained. Felicia never treated him like a fan would, which he loved about her. But when she was 32, Cooley asked her to marry him and she ran away. She wasn't ready to get married yet.

But when Felicia was 22, she gave birth to her only daughter, Raina, who became an excellent student, musician and singer.

Felicia moved from her hometown, Detroit, to California in 1989. The move to California was a bold one for her. While still living in Detroit, she had married a friend to help him attain U.S. citizenship. Felicia, itching to leave the city, took his truck and drove herself straight to California.

"You could not pin me down, because I wanted to travel," Felicia said. She left at 9 a.m. on Friday and arrived in California at 11:30 p.m. on Sunday. "I tore the highway down," she said.

In California, Felicia lived around San Bernardino and Los Angeles. "I went to every beach, every pier. I made it my



Felicia proudly displays Groundcover News, which she sells when she needs help getting back on her feet.

point. That was my whole reason for being out there was getting to the beaches," she said.

Nevertheless, she left to help her daughter. When Raina was 26, she gave birth to her only son, Malachi, in Orlando, Florida at the start of 2014. While examining Raina before the delivery, the doctors heard three heartbeats. After waiting for another baby to come, the doctors discovered that Raina had two aortas. Felicia believes that God gave Raina her second aorta, knowing she would need it later.

Just around a year after Malachi was born, Raina traveled north to Detroit to introduce her son to her grandmother. The trip to Detroit turned Felicia's life in a completely new direction. Raina, 27

at the time, was shot. Due to her extra aorta, she did not lose her life though one bullet hit her in the chest.

Felicia went to Michigan to be with Raina and Malachi after the shooting. Raina's father wanted to get back at Raina's shooters, but Felicia would not have it.

"Let go and let God do justice, because God can do more justice than we can," she said. "It's so easy to go take a man's life, but it's so hard to deal with it afterwards. They take it for granted, that they shot her and everything, and think it's a joke... but it's okay because God will get a hold of them."

Before Raina was shot, she had a photographic memory. After, she was left with memory issues, epilepsy, PTSD, manic depression, bipolar depression and anxiety. Raina also suffered from a stroke on the right side of her brain.

Upon returning to Florida, Felicia took a job working the midnight shift at a Walmart in Clermont to encourage her daughter to get her first job since the shooting. Felicia described the store as the most beautiful place she has ever worked at because they let her work with and help her daughter.

However, the recent gunplay in Orlando gave Raina night terrors and negatively affected her mental recovery. "People need to realize a gun's place is not in the hands of young people who have no morals, no manners and no sense," Felicia said. "Who needs to put guns in their hands?"

The Orlando crime index was almost double the national average. With mold growing in her apartment and her lease up, Felicia decided to move back to Ann Arbor.

Once she returned, she discovered Groundcover News. She was at the Delonis Center when a vendor named

Gabby and her boyfriend encouraged her to sell Ann Arbor's street newspaper, Groundcover, and began to tell her how great it was.

"I went with Gabby one day and just went up there, and they gave me some papers. I just got out there ever since," she said.

Felicia describes Groundcover as a "beautiful paper" and expresses her gratefulness for everything God has done for her.

"I wouldn't want to be out with a cup," she said. "To me, that's no dignity, that's no pride in myself. That's no hope. But when you got Groundcover, you got dignity, you got pride, you got hope."

She inspired Raina to begin selling Groundcover once the weather conditions didn't restrain her, as the cold is too hard for her heart and lungs to handle. She wants to travel back to California with her daughter.

"If I could take any state, I'd have California," she said. "I'd take Groundcover with me, if I could. Groundcover is beautiful. I ain't gonna kid you. It's the best thing that happens to the homeless people out here."

Since moving back from the South, Felicia has been staying with various friends while Raina and Malachi are staying at the Staples Center, a homeless shelter operated by The Salvation Army.

One of Felicia's main joys in life is taking Malachi to the museums to teach him things and watching him learn and discover. She is hoping to take him to the Philadelphia Museum before he turns five. "It's worth every penny. It's so amazing. It's three floors of nothing but artwork from all over the world, everywhere, every corner, every avenue," she said. She last visited the museum in 1994.

Felicia is hoping for Malachi to attend preschool later this year, as soon as he and Raina get into housing. She would like for him to attend school in Ann Arbor and get a good education. At three, Malachi is already reading. "He's a three-year-old going on 30, he's very, very, very wise," she said.

"I feel complete. I feel good every day. If I were to die today I can't do nothing but say, 'Thank you, Jesus.' He gave me a good life I can't complain no matter what happened to me. I thank you because I've had everything," she said.

"God is real, He's so real – don't ever believe that He's not; I don't care how bad your life gets. Now, I never believed that I'd be homeless," she said. "Never."



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JAMIE & ROBIN AGNEW

## Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employees, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

### All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$2, or the face value of the paper. I agree not to ask for more than face value or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Ground-

cover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to:  
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8:30 am and 10:00 am  
Sunday school at 10:15 am  
Fellowship Hour follows each service

**MAY 2017:**

<b>May 6</b>	Ann Arbor Youth Chorale Spring Concert 4 p.m. in the Bethlehem Sanctuary
<b>May 13</b>	German Pretzel Sales, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. \$1 each or \$10 dozen. Call to place your order
<b>May 15</b>	Mother's Day
<b>May 20</b>	Gail and Andrew Jennings concert - Piano and Violin 6:00 p.m. Bethlehem Sanctuary
<b>May 26</b>	German Pretzel Sales, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. \$1 each or \$10 dozen. Call to place your order.
<b>May 29</b>	Memorial Day – office closed

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## Of Days

by Karen L. Totten  
Groundcover Contributor

Agata gave to me a blank book,  
poetic medicine she called it,  
because she had heard on the radio of people who had lived to be  
100 years or more, and each one, all of them, had kept a journal.  
The cover of my book was leather and smooth.  
I wrote a first shy entry, careful not to explore  
anything missing, whatever had dropped away,  
or still me, in another translation.

On the first page I wrote about standing in line at Plum Market, waiting to buy  
red lettuce for dinner. Followed by lists to do, tasks scratched off with pencil,  
quotes from a letter, my neighbor's opinion of current politics.  
Wednesday, I parked outside the school to look into the tiled face  
of St Francis, bearded holy man depicted on a broad column  
his hand raised in blessing.  
I need these stories now, more than food, as Naomi Remen  
has said, and real stories take time.  
Perhaps tomorrow I will find myself part of the landscape, enacted,  
one star in an entire galaxy of stars, or weather and the soft wind.  
Until then, it helps to keep moving, witness, find what has been lost,  
thank the divine morning, whose blush cloak everyday nudges  
the hours from sleep.

## Boober update – manage your environment

by Kevin Spangler  
Groundcover Vendor #307

Boober tours is poppin' for the spring.  
The pedicab crew is getting bigger and better. The weather could not be better and the bikes are in perfect running condition.

We just closed another sponsor, Bank of Ann Arbor, and now have 12 cabs sporting advertising. Bloom City Club has four, Blue Leprechaun has two and so does the Brown Jug. Now that we have Bank of Ann Arbor as a sponsor we can move into a bigger space. The space that we are in is very tight and it is time-consuming moving cabs to complete tasks.

I am excited to finally get back to longer hours of operations. I will be implementing my plan of teaching a spending plan class weekly for my crew.

Apps are very costly to develop and I have been trying to figure out the best ways to complete my goal to have an app that will build community and prevent impaired driving. I finally found the crew to build this amazing app. I am

planning on having the application ready for operation for the students when they come back in fall. I have put together a strategic plan to produce this app that will be focused on making everyone happy and saving lives. This is the short-term goal. I am planting the seeds for the long-term goals and creating a strong foundation to see the fruition of this Monster plan of action.

Sometimes we struggle in a negative mindset. Do you ever wonder why? Look around you. What is your environment? Is there trash around you? Is your car not organized? Is your bed not made? If this is true, it's time to organize. Take a whole day and meticulously detail everything or pay a cleaner. When this is done, you will have a weight lifted off of you and you will want to maintain that sense of order.

Once you are feeling better about yourself, it is time to help the community. I challenge all of Ann Arbor to pick up five pieces of trash for five days. This simple act will clean our communal environment and the environment of our minds.

6	2	9	8	4	1	3	5	7
8	1	7	2	5	3	6	4	9
5	3	4	6	7	9	8	1	2
7	8	6	3	2	5	1	9	4
1	4	2	7	9	6	5	8	3
3	9	5	4	1	8	2	7	6
4	6	1	5	3	7	9	2	8
9	7	3	1	8	2	4	6	5
2	5	8	9	6	4	7	3	1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13					
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14	O	B	O	E	S		15	O	R	A	L		16	O	H	S	
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55	H	E	R	B	A	L	D	R	I	N	K						
63	P	A	P	A													
68	A	G	E	D													
71	D	O	Z	E													

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## Denial: not just a river in Egypt (Part Three – carbonated beverages)

continued from page 6

Scientists were on to the cause. A consumer advocacy nonprofit called the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) in a report titled "Liquid Candy" showed how much sugar people were unknowingly drinking. Companies recognized that obesity and other health concerns were major threats to their business.

To combat this continued bad news, in addition to subtly trying to block altering consumers' drinking patterns, the large soda producers sought to diversify. PepsiCo was aided by its large Frito-Lay snack food division. Coca-Cola embarked on buying up just about every beverage company in sight – so it is now in the orange juice business,

bottled water, sports drinks, and tea. Worldwide, Coca-Cola owns over 500 brands. It started its Venture & Emerging Brands (VEB) division in 2007. This group cultivates relationships and sometimes purchases smaller startups.

But you can bet that with a \$100 billion business in the United

States at stake, soda makers aren't going to relent in their quest to keep everyone drinking their stuff, no matter how devious they have to be to do it.

## Surviving without a check: suburban castaway



as told to  
**La Shawn Courtwright**  
Groundcover  
Vendor #56

I come from a family who always gave me what I wanted. I was disowned when they discovered my secret life.

I was no longer attending classes as they thought. I was able to pull this off for a number of years because they never questioned what I told them. They worked long hours and were easily duped because of the lack of energy to check into what I was really doing.

The time came when I could not fake it anymore because there were no graduation ceremonies to attend. I'd been exposed. They put me out without hesitation.

I used deceptions and scams to swindle monies out of unsuspecting victims for 12 years after my parents disowned me. I had no idea what government assistance was.

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1/4	\$159.95	\$215.95	5 X 6.5
1/2	\$299.95	\$399.95	5 X 14 or 10 X 6.5
Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95	10 X 14

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## Lemon cake

by Petra Flanagan  
Groundcover Contributor

### Ingredients:

1 box Duncan Hines Supreme Lemon Cake Mix

1 box instant lemon pudding (3.4 oz)

1 cup sour cream

1 cup water

1/3 cup canola oil

4 beaten eggs

1/2 cup powdered sugar

Juice of one lemon

Butter or shortening (to grease pan)

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Mix together cake mix, pudding, sour cream, water, oil and eggs.

Pour into greased Bundt pan and bake for 50 minutes or until toothpick inserted into center comes out clean.

Cool for 20 minutes, then invert pan onto a cake board so the cake comes out.

Mix powdered sugar and lemon juice, and pour over top of cake.

Cool completely then sprinkle top of cake with powdered sugar.

*Very easy, very good.*



**The earth laughs in flowers.**  
*Ralph Waldo Emerson*



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## Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter • Cy Klone © 2017

Hmmmm, it looks like it's May already. What does that make you think of?

Flowers? Or is this a not-so-subtle attempt to guilt me into doing something for you on Mother's Day?

Well, I did nurse you when you were the odd kitten out instead of eating you like some other mother cats!

There is that.

I think I made the right choice, though. You were so cute trying to nurse at my neck while you waited for your fat brother to finish nursing.

If we were humans you'd be pulling out the baby pictures next...

Look, you don't need to do anything for me - just seeing you grow up from a runt clinging to life into a grown young capable cat is thanks enough.

Thanks Mom, and a happy Mother's Day to you!!! I do appreciate the whole not eating me thing.